

SODJOURNER TRUTH

DRAWER 10B

REFORMERS

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# Abraham Lincoln and Reformers

Sojourner Truth

Excerpts from newspapers and other  
sources

From the files of the  
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

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amongst ourselves. And it looked for several dreadful months as if this catastrophe impended over us. The people did not know their own strength, nor their own virtue. They were not only more powerful but better than they had supposed themselves. There was a point of insult and injury which they would not suffer to be passed with impunity. Hence has come the war, a dreadful but a purifying process, which has made and will leave the Nation stronger and better than ever it was before. Then came the confiscation of rebel property, including their slaves. Then the prohibition of military slave-catching. Then the Abolition of Slavery in the District of Columbia and in the Territories. Then the employment of black troops. Next, the recognition of Liberia and Hayti. Then the Abolition of the Fugitive Slave laws. And, at last, the Emancipation in Maryland and in Missouri. Who, but a fanatical Abolitionist, ever expected to see the time when the least of these things should come to pass? And not even the most fanatic of Abolitionists expected such a harvest as this to be gathered in within a single Presidential term.

But, astonishing as these events are, the elevation of Mr. Chase to the Chief-Justiceship of the United States is one scarcely less amazing. If there were any part of the government in which slavery seemed to have established itself upon foundations which could not be shaken, it was the Supreme Court. It had been the especial care of every President and every Senate, up to 1860, to see to it that no man should ever be suffered to mount the bench of that Court who was not perfectly sound on the question of slavery and all its collateral and possible issues. For five and thirty years, at least, no man has obtained that dignity whose antecedents as to slavery and abolition had not been thoroughly scanned and sifted, and who had not proved by his works, or by his local habitation, that he was thoroughly to be depended upon. A majority of the Judges, or nearly so, were appointed from the slave States; and the vacancies, as the older Judges from the free States dropped off, were filled with ready tools or pliant sycophants, even worse than the slaveholding Judges themselves. And should one be found to disappoint the well-grounded expectations of the appointing power, as in the case of Judge Benjamin R. Curtis, of Massachusetts, who dared dissent from the Dred Scott decision, the cold shoulder was turned to him with such frigid intensity that the post became insupportable and a resignation inevitable. The secession has changed this state of things entirely. Though all of Mr. Lincoln's appointments were not made with a strict eye to this supreme necessity, and there was just fear once that a majority could not be had on an anti-slavery issue, while Chief-Justice Taney presided, the torrent of events has swept away that fear even before the tide of time had swallowed up the Chief-Justice. And now Mr. Chase, an Abolitionist from his youth upward, who had long suffered obloquy and professional damage because of his offensive opinions, though they did carry him into the Executive chair of Ohio, into the Senate and the Cabinet, at last, Mr. Chase is made Chief-Justice of the United States in the room of Roger B. Taney! The elevation of Mr. Garrison to the Presidency were scarcely a more improbable occurrence. It is the most signal triumph of anti-slavery over slavery that our history has yet seen. His natural gifts and legal attainments we are assured are such as to be sure to do honor to the nomination—a nomination which we believe no disinterested man, free from bias towards slavery, will hesitate to pronounce one eminently "fit to be made."

We trust, however, that the new Chief-Justice will have no occasion to adjudicate upon any of the vexed questions which it has been apprehended might yet grow out of slavery. He certainly will not if Congress will but act upon the wise and statesmanlike suggestion of the President in his Message and pass the Amendment to the Constitution, out of hand. We are glad to see that the opinion is gaining ground that this Congress will fill up its measure of good works by this crowning glory. We know that the

Rear-Admiral Farragut arrived at this port on Tuesday, and was received with high honor by the merchants. Further honors await the old hero.

The leading publishers and authors of New York have presented to Prof. Goldwin Smith more than a hundred volumes of American history, biography and general literature, by native authors, most of them standard works, a token of their recognition of his noble advocacy of the national cause.

The cause of the resignation of Gen. Noel Dow was, the delicate state of his health, induced by the privations and exposures to which he was subjected while a prisoner of war in rebel hands. He had no hope of being sufficiently restored for active service, for a long time to come, if ever.

A movement has been set on foot among the friends of the late Gen. Birney, at Philadelphia, to raise a fund for his widow and family; and the *Bulletin* states that the subscriptions already made are so large as to render it certain that an ample sum will be obtained. The project to erect a magnificent monument to his memory has been wisely abandoned. A proper monument will be put up, but the bulk of the fund contributed will be set apart for his widow and children.

We are indebted to the Hon. Charles Sumner for a copy of the "Report of the Secretary of War, communicating, in compliance with a resolution of the Senate of the 26th of May, a copy of the Preliminary Report, and also of the Final Report of the American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission." These Reports make a pamphlet of 110 pages, invaluable for the facts it contains in relation to the Freedmen, and the light it sheds upon the most important problems of the war.

We see in the Bucks County (Pa.) *Intelligencer* of this week an announcement that the Hon. GEORGE THOMPSON will lecture as follows:

Trenton, N. J., Monday evening, Dec. 19.  
Lambertville, N. J., Tuesday evening, Dec. 20.  
Doylestown, Pa., Court House, Wednesday evening, Dec. 21.  
Hartboro, Academy, 1 p. m., Dec. 22.  
Newtown, Agricultural Hall, 1 p. m., Dec. 24.  
Fallsington Meeting-House, 1 p. m., Dec. 25.

In all but the last named place his subject will be—"The Past, the Present, and the Future of the American Republic." At Fallsington it will be "The Freedmen."

Deacon John Phillips of Sturbridge, Mass., whose great age (104 years) has been the theme of much remark recently, has just received the following letter from President Lincoln:

EXECUTIVE MANSION, WASHINGTON, }  
November 21, 1864.  
MR. DEAR SIR: I have heard of the incident at the polls in your town, in which you acted so honorable a part, and I take the liberty of writing to you to express my personal gratitude for the compliment paid me by the suffrage of a citizen so venerable.

The example of such devotion to civic duties in one whose days have already been extended an average lifetime beyond the palmist's limit cannot but be valuable and fruitful. It is not for myself only, but for the country, which you have in your sphere served so long and so well, that I thank you.

Your friend and servant, A. LINCOLN.

A large meeting of merchants was held in Philadelphia on the 7th inst., at which resolutions were adopted presenting the name of John W. Forney as the candidate of Pennsylvania for a position in the Cabinet, in the event of a reconstruction. It is said that delegations have gone to Washington to urge the appointment of Col. Forney as Secretary of the Interior in the event of Judge Usher's going upon the bench, or as Secretary of the Navy in case Secretary Welles should accept the embassy to France. We have nothing to say against Mr. Forney, and should not be disposed to see him in the Cabinet; but we dislike this system of political *boasting*, which usually proceeds from combinations of men who are seeking for contracts or subordinate offices.

The Editor of the Cambridge (Md.) *Intelligencer*, having heard the speech lately made by Frederick Douglass in Baltimore, says:

## LETTER FROM SOJOURNER TRUTH.

THE STORY OF HER INTERVIEW WITH THE PRESIDENT.

[The following letter from SOJOURNER TRUTH, written by a friend at her dictation, was addressed to Rowland Johnson, who has kindly handed it to us for publication. Our readers will be glad to see Sojourner's own account of her visit to the President.]

FREEDMAN'S VILLAGE, Va., Nov. 17, 1864.

DEAR FRIEND: I am at Freedman's Village. After visiting the President, I spent three weeks at Mrs. Swisholm's, and held two meetings in Washington, at Rev. Mr. Garnet's Presbyterian Church, for the benefit of the Colored Soldiers' Aid Society. These meetings were successful in raising funds. One week after that I went to Mason's Island, and saw the Freedmen there, and held several meetings, remained a week and was present at the celebration of the Emancipation of the slaves of Maryland, and spoke on that occasion.

It was about 8 o'clock, a.m., when I called on the President. Upon entering his reception room we found about a dozen persons in waiting, among them two colored women. I had quite a pleasant time waiting until he was disengaged, and enjoyed his conversation with others; he showed as much kindness and consideration to the colored persons as to the whites—if there was any difference, more. One case was that of a colored woman, who was sick and likely to be turned out of her house on account of her inability to pay her rent. The President listened to her with much attention, and spoke to her with kindness and tenderness. He said he had given so much he could give no more, but told her where to go and get the money, and asked Mrs. C—n to assist her, which she did.

The President was seated at his desk. Mrs. C. said to him, "This is Sojourner Truth, who has come all the way from Michigan to see you." He then arose, gave me his hand, made a bow, and said, "I am pleased to see you."

I said to him, "Mr. President, when you first took your seat I feared you would be torn to pieces, for I likened you unto Daniel, who was thrown into the lions' den; and if the lions did not tear you into pieces, I knew that it would be God that had saved you; and I said if He spared me I would see you before the four years expired, and he has done so, and now I am here to see you for myself."

He then congratulated me on my having been spared. Then I said: "I appreciate you, for you are the best President who has ever taken the seat." He replied thus: "I expect you have reference to my having emancipated the slaves in my proclamation. But," said he, mentioning the names of several of his predecessors (and among them emphatically that of Washington), "they were all just as good, and would have done just as he had done if the time had come. If the people over the river (pointing across the Potomac) had behaved themselves, I could not have done what I have; but they did not, and I was compelled to do these things." I then said: "I thank God that you were the instrument selected by him and the people to do it."

He then showed me the Bible presented to him by the colored people of Baltimore, of which you have no doubt seen a description. I have seen it for myself, and it is beautiful beyond description. After I had looked it over, I said to him: "This is beautiful indeed; the colored people have given this to the Head of the government, and that government once sanctioned laws that would not permit its people to learn enough to enable them to read this Book. And for what? Let them answer who can?"

I must say, and I am proud to say, that I never was treated by any one with more kindness and cordiality than were shown to me by that great and good man, Abraham Lincoln, by the grace of God President of the United States for four years more. He took my little book, and with the same hand that signed the death-warrant of slavery, he wrote as follows:

"For Aunt Sojourner Truth,  
"Oct. 29, 1864. A. LINCOLN."

As I was taking my leave, he arose and took my hand, and said he would be pleased to have me call again. I felt that I was in the presence of a friend, and I now thank God from the bottom of my heart that I always have advocated his cause, and have done it openly and boldly. I shall feel still more in duty bound to do so in time to come. May God assist me.

Now I must tell you something of this place. I found things quite as well as I expected. I think I can

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The rest of ST's letter is not related to Lincoln.

This is considered the ~~be~~ the version of this letter closest to the original.



*Sojourner Truth, freed slave who became the friend of Abraham Lincoln and gave him counsel in his work to abolish slavery, is to be memorialized in bronze by the citizens of Battle Creek, where she lived and died, and where she lies buried*

**S**OJOURNER Truth! A name so striking that once heard it is scarcely likely to be forgotten. A name that paints with a single stroke the life of the woman who bore it—who chose it, she said, at the direction of God.

A name that for many years was emblazoned the length and breadth of the United States and signified wherever it was written or spoken or heard a simple and unquenchable faith in God, deep religious conviction and teaching, and unrelenting work for the freedom and betterment of her race. A name associated with such names as Abraham Lincoln, General U. S. Grant, William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Susan B. Anthony and many others written deep in the history of the country, all of whom were her friends.

Now that name is to be inscribed on a memorial in the city of Battle Creek, Michigan. Unique both in its purpose and in the form it will take, the bronze plaque with figures in relief will be six feet high and will be set within a shelter of lasting red marble, recessed, with canopy top and seats at each side like the arms of a chair. A bronze inscription will tell of her life and work to all who pause and read.

**T**HE small tombstone that long stood at the head of her grave is crumbling into decay and its inscription is almost obliterated by the brush of time. Citizens of Battle Creek who knew her and were her friends, those who have only heard of her and the people of her own race form the Sojourner Truth Memorial Association which is erecting the striking monument to take its place.

It is a singular thing for a city to do, this erection of a monument to a colored woman. But it was a singular woman



## SOJOURNER TRUTH

By NELLIE BROWNE DUFF

who is thus memorialized, a remarkable character who left her stamp on many lives, white and black.

Sojourner Truth went to Battle Creek in 1856 and bought a small home there. From that place she went forth to travel the length and breadth of the land, preaching with a strange eloquence a strangely acquired gospel of God and laboring unceasingly to free her people.

She became known to the great men and women of the country, enjoying their friendship. She was given national publicity, the subject of editorial and news comment in leading newspapers of the United States. People traveled miles to hear her.

She is described by those who knew her as a tall gaunt homely woman, over six feet, awkward but with a curious dignity and ease of manner, unabashed in any presence, with deep-set piercing eyes, a simple and powerful eloquence, a great

conviction of speech, and a deep thrilling voice. Untaught and illiterate, she is recorded as having a remarkable mind, an insatiable longing for knowledge, no hesitation in asking people to read to her the books and newspapers they discussed, a shrewd wit and sense of humor. She never learned to read or write, but was strangely susceptible to all that in thought and action was current in the world at that time.

**S**HE became the most famous colored orator in the United States. At the anti-slavery and woman's rights meetings of those days she was one of the chief attractions, her shrewd good sense, oddities of speech and whimsical illustrations never failing to produce sympathetic interest, while with the power of her oratory she swayed men and women. She engaged the leading preachers and

(Continued on page 33)

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## Memorial Sought for Ex-Slave Who Worked to Help Negroes

Battle Creek, Mich., Sept. 9 (U.P.) —Negro women are renewing a campaign seeking \$5,000 for construction of a memorial over the grave here of Sojourner Truth, the illiterate Negro of the War Between the States era who preached, fought for her race, and talked with famous writers and President Lincoln.

The drive, first begun in 1929, was abandoned because of the depression, but now its sponsors hope to obtain sufficient support to place in a Battle Creek cemetery near a modest tombstone marked "Is God Dead?" a tribute to a woman whose funeral in 1883 was attended by 1,000 mourners.

Sojourner Truth's father was brought to the United States from Africa. She spent her first thirty years as a slave and never learned to read or write, yet many recognized her influence.

### Her Fame Preceded Her.

President Lincoln, when she informed him during a visit that she had never heard of him until his nomination for the Presidency, is said to have replied:

"But I have known of you for years."

Sojourner—she took that name when she began preaching—was freed in 1827 under a New York law, and immediately afterward attracted attention for her successful court fight for a son taken from her to Alabama. Her national reputation was won, however, when she left her job as domestic in 1843, started out with 25 cents, and toured the country, preaching and teaching.

It was from this period that inspiration for her tombstone inscription came. As Frederick Douglas, the abolitionist, talked indifferently to an indifferent au-

dience, she revived both speaker and spectators by a single remark. She arose and said: "Frederick, is God dead?"

Sojourner moved to Battle Creek during the War Between the States, but she had memories of acquaintance with persons like John Greenleaf Whittier, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Wendell Phillips, and William Lloyd Garrison.

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Trotter attended the founding conference of the NAACP in New York in 1909, but aside from occasional contacts over the next few years, never joined forces with the new organization. He could not be reconciled with the two main leaders of the early NAACP, Oswald Garrison Villard and his nemesis Du Bois. He was also estranged from the group's local leadership in Boston. More to the point, he could not abide the white money and leadership that ran the NAACP at least until the 1920s. His own group, the National Equal Rights League, which grew out of the 1908 presidential campaign, was always (as he described it in 1920) "an organization of the colored people and for the colored people and led by the colored people." As the NAACP's influence grew, Trotter's leadership became increasingly idiosyncratic and isolated on the left wing of the race's leadership.

His effectiveness as a leader was also diminished by his shifting support of political parties. Because of Roosevelt's summary discharge without honor of three companies of the Negro 25th Infantry following the Brownsville Riot of August 1906, Trotter supported Sen. Joseph B. Foraker, who had opposed their action, for the Republican nomination for president in 1908. With the support of such Regular Republicans as Charles Anderson and Ralph Tyler, Taft was overwhelmingly nominated. Taft's appointment of William H. Lewis as U.S. assistant attorney-general did not prevent Trotter from accusing Taft of fostering and encouraging "race prejudice and race antagonism [more] than any man in the history of the country." Like Du Bois and Bishop Alexander Walters, Trotter supported Woodrow Wilson for president in 1912, largely because of the desire to keep Roosevelt, and to a lesser extent Taft, out of the White House.

In taking this action, so reflective of his mugwump tendencies—his National Independent Political League campaigned under the slogan, "We Stand for Men and Measures Rather than for Party"—Trotter found a dubious race champion in Woodrow Wilson. As president, Wilson approved the increased segregation of federal office buildings, failed to appoint Negroes even to their "traditional" positions in the civil service, and otherwise embarrassed his Negro campaign supporters. When Trotter brought a delegation to the White House in November 1914, Wilson and Trotter engaged in an intemperate argument for forty-five minutes that ended when Wilson ordered the group from his office.

In his later years Trotter seemed a picturesque anachronism. He was arrested again in 1915 for his part in trying to have the film *The Birth of a Nation* closed in Boston. He made a quixotic journey to the peace conference at Versailles in 1919, aiming to have a racial equality clause adopted in the treaty. But essentially he confined himself to Boston as his national reputation declined inexorably. His wife's death in the influenza epidemic of 1918 removed his life's partner and most important supporter. With her loss the *Guardian* and its editor grew ever more isolated. He hung on into the early years of the Depression, still putting out his paper, and died, an apparent suicide, on his sixty-second birthday in 1934.

His early militancy made him attractive to some later

viewpoints. But fundamentally, Monroe Trotter was an old-fashioned Christian gentleman, imbued with concepts of duty and service, secure in the simple moralism of the nineteenth century, concerned above all to set an example for his race to follow. "I must say to you John," he lectured a college friend seven years after their graduation, "that you showed poor staying powers to get into the use of tobacco and of beer. It is strange to me how you fellows change your principles. Tobacco is not important, but it is important to set a good example in the matter of liquor." More than anything else, he would want this final judgment: that he did not change his principles.

Trotter was one of the twentieth century's first important Negro leaders in the militant tradition. He made his greatest impression as the spearhead of the race's internal struggle against the conservative leadership of Booker T. Washington. Later, during the early years of the NAACP, Trotter's National Equal Rights League was the main organizational alternative for Negroes who liked the NAACP's relative militancy but disliked the white money and leadership behind it. Personally, Trotter epitomized Richard Hofstadter's embattled mugwump: the patrician at bay, displaced by the vulgar currents of a new era.

See Stephen R. Fox's *The Guardian of Boston: William Monroe Trotter* (1970). Aside from the scattered files of the *Guardian*, major manuscript sources are the Trotter correspondence in the papers of W. E. B. Du Bois at the University of Massachusetts, of J. A. Fairlie at the University of Illinois, of Archibald H. Grimké, Joel E. Spingarn, and Freeman H. M. Murray in the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University, and of George A. Towns at Atlanta University. There is a small collection of Trotter papers at Boston University.

—STEPHEN R. FOX

**TRUTH, SOJOURNER** (1797?–1883), evangelist, abolitionist, reformer, and women's rights activist. Next to the youngest of the several children of James and Elizabeth, slaves of a wealthy Dutch-speaking farmer, she was born in Hurley, Ulster County, N.Y. The facts about her early life are obscure. Her original name is variously given as Belle, Isabelle, and Isabella, and her first language was Dutch. From a very young age she spoke to God and believed that He spoke to her. Inspired by her mother, from whom she was separated when she was eleven, her religious beliefs were intensified by the cruelty of her slavery experiences. Sold four times, she was tormented from 1810 to 1826 by the wife of John Dumont, her master in New Paltz, N.Y. She bore at least five children to a fellow slave, Thomas. Her son Peter was sold and sent to Alabama despite a state law forbidding such a sale, and became emotionally disturbed for the rest of life as a result of beatings by an insane master.

Belle seems to have been protected against a loss of faith by an early decision that God's seeming indifference was rooted in her own failure to ask His help soon enough or earn His goodwill by struggling to do a better job herself. For years she sought her image of God in a man, twice believing she had found him. Twice deceived, she came at last to trust only the voices in her own head which, as she matured, articulated her con-





science and her personal vision of truth and justice. But her independent nature had asserted itself even in slavery. She had run away from Dumont in 1826 when he broke his promise to free her a year before state law would require, and found refuge with Isaac and Maria Van Wagenen.

Newly emancipated but still barefoot and penniless, she had confronted the local court with the aid of other Quaker friends and obtained the return of her son from Alabama. About 1829, as a domestic servant and evangelist in New York City, she searched for fourteen years for her particular idea of justice among the churches and religious sects of the corrupt and fast-growing port. From 1829 to 1834 she was particularly influenced by a wealthy fanatic, Elijah Pierson and his wife (until her death in 1830), and through him the self-styled prophet Matthias whose "Kingdom" was at Sing Sing. When the "Kingdom" fell apart in 1834, she lost her savings and furniture. Meanwhile she attended from time to time the African Zion Church in New York City. One day in 1843 her voice told her to leave the city and testify to the sins committed against her people.

She assumed the name "Truth" for God, but "Sojourner" because she was to "travel up and down the land" testifying and showing the people their sins. The forty-six-year-old pilgrim wandered through New England until she reached the utopian colony called the Northampton Association of Education and Industry. There she became an enthusiastic convert to abolition, working with William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips, Frederick Douglass, David Ruggles, and other famous abolitionists. While Douglass was speaking at an anti-slavery convention in Boston, he expressed his apprehension that "slavery could only be destroyed by bloodshed, when I was suddenly and sharply interrupted by my good old friend Sojourner Truth with the question, 'Frederick, is God dead?' 'No,' I answered, 'and because God is not dead slavery can only end in blood.' My quaint old sister was of the Garrison school of non-resistants, and was shocked at my sanguinary doctrine, but she too became an advocate of the sword, when the war for the maintenance of the Union was declared" (*Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* . . . edited with a new introduction by Rayford W. Logan [1962], p. 275).

In 1850 Sojourner Truth discovered the new women's rights movement at a conference in Worcester, Mass., and began her long friendship with Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and other leaders.

With her six-foot frame, black skin, and deep, resonant voice, Sojourner Truth aroused curiosity wherever she appeared. She became famous for her quick wit, remarkable singing, and pithy genius for illuminating controversial issues in her own unschooled language. In 1851 she headed west to attend a women's rights conference in Akron, Ohio, and stayed to testify in other western states, settling in the mid-1850s in Battle Creek, Mich. There her three daughters and grandsons joined her, and she solicited gifts and food for the volunteer colored regiments after the outbreak of the Civil War.

In 1864 she went to Washington, where she met President Lincoln. She taught housekeeping skills to former female field hands at Freedmen's Village in Arling-

ton, Va., nursed colored soldiers at Freedmen's Hospital, and helped distribute relief supplies to the jobless ex-slaves who crowded the camps of the capital city. Distressed at the suffering and enforced idleness of the destitute refugees, she conceived the idea of a "Negro State" in the West. She presented a petition to some senators in 1870 to settle Negroes on public land in the West. But it had too few names, she felt, so she worked for several years to get many more names in order to impress Congress. Although her campaign failed, it is believed that the exodus of many Negro families from farther south in 1879 may have been inspired in part by her idea. According to available evidence, she visited some of the refugees in Kansas.

She died on Nov. 26, 1883, at her home in Battle Creek. She was, as far as can be determined, eighty-six years old. Her funeral at the Congregational Church was said to have been the largest ever held in the town. She was buried in Oak Hill Cemetery, Battle Creek.

See Jacqueline Bernard's *Journey Toward Freedom: The Story of Sojourner Truth* (1967). Olive Gilbert published several editions of the original *Narrative of Sojourner Truth . . . Drawn from Her Book of Life*, originally printed in 1850. The 1878 edition was reprinted by Arno Press in 1968. Hertha Pauli's *Her Name was Sojourner Truth* (1962) was the first effort to piece out Sojourner Truth's life beyond the materials offered in the Gilbert book. Arthur Huff Fauset's *Sojourner Truth: God's Faithful Pilgrim* (1938) was the first modern biography that restored her to public attention. There is no sketch in the *DAB*, but *NAW* (1971, 3:479-81) has an illuminating article by Saunders Redding.

—JACQUELINE DE S. BERNARD

**TUBMAN, HARRIET** (c. 1821-1913), fugitive slave, abolitionist, nurse, spy, and social reformer. Born in Dorchester County on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, she was the daughter of slaves, Benjamin Ross and Harriet Green, and was originally named Araminta by her master. Defying slave custom, she later used her mother's first name. During childhood Harriet sustained a serious head injury which caused her to suffer sleeping spells periodically for the rest of her life. Slavery offered Harriet no opportunity to attend school; however, she possessed innate intelligence and creativity as well as extraordinary foresight and judgment. She acquired unusual physical strength as she worked in the fields, and within her small but muscular ebony frame swelled a growing determination to be free. In 1844 her mother forced her to marry John Tubman, a free man. When her master died in 1849 and the rumor spread that the slaves were to be sold to the Deep South, she and her two brothers decided to escape to the North. They returned, but she continued to Philadelphia. Two years later she went back to Maryland for her husband, who had married another woman.

On her journey to freedom Harriet Tubman was guided by the North Star and aided also by conductors of the Underground Railroad, such as Ezekiel Hunn and Thomas Garrett of Delaware. But while the masses of her race remained enslaved she could find no true solace in her newly won liberty. She made approximately nineteen trips into the South and rescued some 300

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Next Monday, February 12, is the birthday of Abraham Lincoln, and a legal holiday in Michigan.

We would like to print a story about Lincoln every week, but lacking the time and space to do this we bring one out whenever possible.

This story of the Emancipator, is taken from Lincoln Lore, published by the Lincoln National Life Foundation, Dr. Louis A. Warren, editor. It is a story also of Sojourner Truth of whom the Republican has spoken occasionally in this column.

She was a colored evangelist, a wonderful woman. She once spoke in Decatur for the W. C. T. U., and we have printed the story of that outstanding event in our memory. Her home in later years was in Battle Creek.

It was on October 29, 1864, less than a week before the election, that Sojourner Truth visited President Lincoln, at Washington, and we have her account of the visit in a letter which she wrote a few days later on November 17th.

"It was about 8 o'clock a. m., when I called on the president. Upon entering his reception room we found about a dozen persons waiting, among them two colored women. I had quite a pleasant time waiting until he was disengaged, and enjoyed his conversation with others; he showed as much kindness and consideration to the colored persons as to the whites—if there was any difference, more. One case was that of a colored woman who was sick and likely to be turned out of her house on account of her inability to pay her rent. The president listened to her with much attention, and spoke to her with kindness and tenderness. He said he had given so much he could give no more, but told her where to go and get the money, and asked Mrs. C—n to assist her, which she did.

"The president was seated at his desk. Mrs. C. said to him, 'This is Sojourner Truth, who has come all

## THIS WEEK

(Continued from first page)

the way from Michigan to see you. He then arose, gave me his hand, made a bow, and said, 'I am pleased to see you.'

"I said to him, Mr. President, when you first took your seat I feared you would be torn to pieces, for I likened you unto Daniel, who was thrown into the lion's den; and if the lions did not tear you into pieces, I knew that it would be God that had saved you; and I said if he spared me I would see you before the four years expired, and he has done so, and now I am here to see you for myself.

"He then congratulated me on my having been spared. Then I said, I appreciate you, for you are the best president who has ever taken the seat. He replied: 'I expect you have reference to my having emancipated the slaves in my proclamation. But,' said he, mentioning the names of several of his predecessors (and among them emphatically that of Washington), 'they were all just as good, and would have done just as I have done if the time had come. If the people over the river (pointing across the Potomac) had behaved themselves, I could not have done what I have; but they did not, which gave me the opportunity to do these things.' I then said, I thank God that you were the instrument selected by him and the people to do it. I told him that I had never heard of him before he was talked of for president. He smilingly replied, 'I had heard of you many times before that.'

"He then showed me the Bible presented to him by the colored people of Baltimore, of which you have no doubt seen a description. I have seen it for myself, and it is beautiful beyond description. After I had looked it over, I said to him, this is beautiful indeed; the colored people have given this to the head of the government, and that government once sanctioned laws that would not permit its people to learn enough to enable them to read this book. And for what? Let them answer who can.

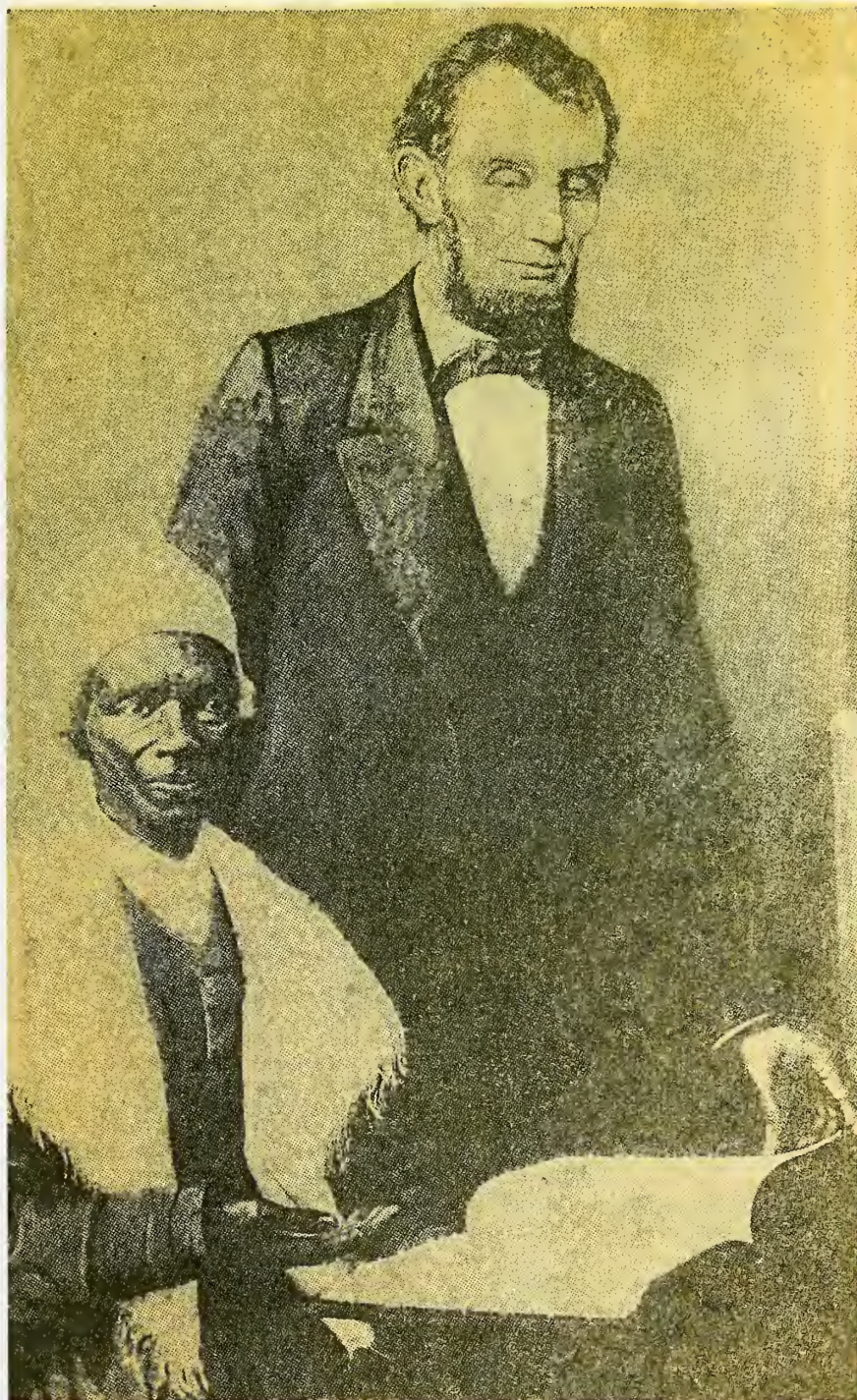
"I must say, and I am proud to say, that I never was treated by any one with more kindness and cordiality than were shown to me by that great and good man, Abraham Lincoln, by the grace of God president of the United States for four years more. He took my little book, and with the same hand that signed the death-warrant of slavery, he wrote as follows:

"For Aunty Sojourner Truth,  
"Oct. 29, 1864. A. Lincoln."

"As I was taking my leave, he arose and took my hand, and said he would be pleased to have me call again. I felt that I was in the presence of a friend, and I now thank God from the bottom of my heart that I always have advocated his cause, and have done it openly and boldly. I shall feel still more in duty bound to do so in time to come. May God assist me."







*Sojourner Truth, pictured above with President Abraham Lincoln, was one of the early crusaders for equal rights for both blacks and women.*

#### Sojourner Truth (1797-1893)

Born a slave in 1797 in Hurley, Ulster County, New York, Isabella Baumfree saw her 12 brothers and sisters sold into slavery. Later she would see most of the 13 children she bore sold into slavery, also.

By the age of 14 she had been sold twice, raped by her master and forced to marry an older slave. Despite her poor beginnings, she was a strong and determined woman with a quick wit and never one to sit by and let injustice triumph.

Destined for great things, Isabella's continuing visions convinced her she should become a preacher, and on June 1, 1843, she claimed the name of "Sojourner Truth."

A tall, striking figure, she was most noted for her magnificent oratory. Also a supporter of women's rights. Sojourner made what was perhaps her most moving speech at the 1851 National Women's Rights Convention in Akron, O.

Incensed by a prior male speaker's comments, Sojourner rose from her seat in a back corner and slowly walked to the podium. "The man over there says women need to be helped into carriages and lifted over ditches and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages or over puddles, or gives me the best place — and ain't I a woman," she thundered.

"Look at my arm! I have plowed and planted and gathered into barns and no man could head me — and ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man — when I could get it — and bear the lash as well. And ain't I a woman? I have borne 13 children and seen most of them sold into slavery and when I cried out with a mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me — and ain't I a woman?"

Spending her last years on a small farm in Battle Creek, Mich., she never lost her infinite faith, and at the end, on Nov. 26, 1893, she said, "I isn't going to die, honey. I's just going home, like a shooting star."





# Vinette Carroll is Sojourner

L.A. Times-Post-Newsday Feature

She was freed from slavery and became a self-styled itinerant teacher. Because this woman believed that her life's mission was to travel spreading the Divine Word, she assumed the name that she felt God had given her: Sojourner Truth.

In the sixth historical special of the "American Parade" series Vinnette Carroll stars as the former slave who went on to become an active abolitionist and campaigner for personal liberties.

In the telecast, titled simply "Sojourner," Miss Carroll will repeat the role of the black historical figure whom she introduced in the highly acclaimed show last year, "We the Women."

Although Sojourner Truth is listed in most encyclopedias, the slavery fighter and early crusader for women's rights is little known to most persons.

"That's precisely the reason I find the role so important," Miss Carroll said recently in her tiny, cluttered loft office in Manhattan's garment district.

"As a child my mother taught us about Sojourner," Miss Carroll said, "and it was something we knew and appreciated. She was no stranger to me, and I feel it's important for her to achieve the rightful place in history she deserves."

A respected producer-director and actress, Miss Carroll is the guiding force behind the Urban Arts Corps, an organization that develops and produces theatrical properties with an eye toward bringing forth the best in minority-group talent.

"Strangely enough," Miss Carroll said, "I have a great rapport with Sojourner — I'm much like she was. I have a heavy and deep voice, she also was said to have one. We both spent most of our lives interested in young people, and we both have a fire in our bellies."

In preparation for her portrayal of Sojourner Truth, she delved into the history books and researched everything she could about the woman.

Sojourner Truth was born, in upstate New York in 1797, it is believed. Her real name was Isabella Baumfree. After freedom had been granted under the New York State Emancipation Act of 1827, she adopted her new name and began to lecture across the country.

Sojourner Truth had a gift for oratory, and since black women were early activists in the anti-slavery movement, the dynamic proselytizer soon was addressing countless meetings.

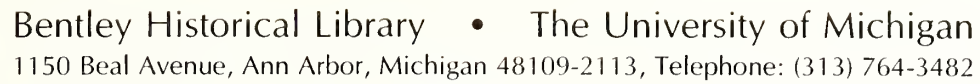
Before the Civil War she was befriended by such leading northern white abolitionists as James and Lucretia Mott and Harriet Beecher Stowe. "Sojourner was a strong woman," Miss Carroll said. "Her impact was due largely to her superior intelligence, despite the fact that she couldn't read or write."



Sojourner Truth, Vinette Carroll, Sunday 8:30 p.m., WANE-TV









MICHIGAN HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS

BENTLEY HISTORICAL LIBRARY

BERENICE BRYANT LOWE

Aa     Lowe, Berenice Bryant  
2       Papers, ca. 1880s-1980s, of Berenice Lowe, Battle Creek, Michigan,  
Ac     local historian; include collected materials relating to Sojourner  
Truth, C.W. Post, and Margaret Nickerson Martin; miscellaneous letters  
of John G. Whittier and George W. Cable; correspondence of Lowe with  
writer Gerald Carson; diaries of 1963 European trip; scrapbook, 1910-  
1922, of Stanley T. Lowe, largely relating to University of Michigan  
activities; and miscellaneous.

<u>Box No.</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	Collected material on Sojourner Truth (12 folders and 1 reel of microfilm of the contents of the 12 folders) (see attached item listing) Miscellaneous Sojourner Truth materials (added to collection after 1964, and not microfilmed) Margaret Nickerson Martin papers, ca. 1937-1946 C.W. Post materials, 1967 and 1969 Miscellaneous clippings 1982 accession (largely Battle Creek materials) European diaries, 1963 (4 v.) "Looking Back - Battle Creek," 1969  1985 accession: Gerald Carson correspondence (5 folders) [       ] Oldfield World War II era correspondence George Buckley materials Autographs (and related) (2 folders)  Photographs (2 envelopes and 1 oversize folder, Ac) Scrapbook, 1910-1922, of Stanley T. Lowe





Berenice Lowe Collection

Preliminary Contents List

The first twelve folders have been microfilmed. (We have both positive & negative.)

Folder

- 1 Biographical information on Sojourner Truth compiled by Berenice Lowe.
- 2 Bibliography
  1. Chronology, Notes and Sources - Hertha Pauli - 10 pages.
  2. Bibliography from "Her Name Was Sojourner Truth" - Pauli. (MISSING)
  3. Re "Narrative of Sojourner Truth" letters from the Library of Congress.
  4. Report on National Anti-Slavery Standard.
- 3 Biographies of Sojourner Truth
  1. Lowe, Berenice: Biographers of Sojourner Truth.
  2. Sweet, Forest G: Sojourner Truth, Apostle of Freedom for her Race. Battle Creek Sunday Enquirer. Part 1. July 10, 1910. (Part 2, July 17 is on microfilm, Willard Library, Battle Creek).
  3. Brown, J. H.: Sojourner Truth. Battle Creek Moon-Journal, Apr. 26, 1929.  
: Lincoln and Sojourner Truth. Ibid. May 3, 1929.
  4. Dolliver, George B.: Sojourner Truth (in Mainly About Folks column) Battle Creek Enquirer and News, March 22, 1942.
  5. Lowe, B.: Introduction to item 6.
  6. Sizer, Nelson: Phrenological Character.
- 4 Newspaper Clippings and Reminiscences about Sojourner Truth
  1. Items from Burton Historical Collection with letter. 8 pages.
  2. Items from National Anti-Slavery Standard with introduction. 5 pages.
  3. Items from Battle Creek papers. 13 pages.
  4. Sojourner Truth and Her Birthplace. The Illustrated American. 1896. 2 pages.





(Continued)

6. Items from Detroit Free Press.
7. Reminiscences. 2 pages.

#### Obituaries and Tributes

The death of Sojourner Truth occurred at 3 AM, November 26, 1883, in Battle Creek, Michigan.

1. Battle Creek Moon
2. Battle Creek Journal, 2 pages
3. Good Health
4. Photo of grave. (Courtesy of Lou Ryason, Battle Creek Historical Society.) na 3027

#### Book Reviews

1. Fauset, Arthur H.: God's Faithful Pilgrim. 1938  
Reviewed by L. R. Conner. 6 pages.
2. Ibid. New York Times  
Pauli, Hertha: Her Name Was Sojourner Truth 1962  
Christian Science Monitor
3. Ibid. Pauli Reviewed by Geraldine Jackson, Battle Creek Enquirer and News.

#### Articles

1. Lowe, Berenice "The Family of Sojourner Truth", Michigan Heritage III (Summer 1962), 181-185.
2. Obituaries of Sophia and Thomas Schuyler and Diana Corbin.
3. Interview with Diana Corbin.

#### Photographs

1. Lincoln and Sojourner from a painting by Frank Courter. 1893. na 3023
2. Lincoln and Sojourner, Perry photo of painting. Photo used as model by Courter. na 3026
- \*3. Biography of Courter by Dolliver, Mainly about Folks.
4. Lincoln and Sojourner, photo of painting by Jackson. 1913
- \*5. Typescript from Fisk University re Lincoln Bible.
- < 6. Three additional photos of Sojourner. (nasuqet in UA Truth, Sojourner.)
7. Photo taken in Detroit. (MISSING) other two missing
8. Two photos of Diana Corbin. (MISSING)
9. Photo of Frances Titus. na 3028
- \*10. Copy of letter from E. M. Spicer re two paintings of Sojourner.



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### Mementoes

1. Lincoln signature and "witness"
2. Poster advertising Sojourner Truth's lecture RA 1024
3. Photograph of a dress from Kingman museum, comment on dress
4. "Book of Life" Part 3 (See ~~attached~~ <sup>quodized</sup> ~~1910x~~ <sup>1910x</sup>)
5. Message from Sojourner. Published 1884.

### Songs

1. Introduction
2. Letter from Library of Congress re songs.
3. A hymn to Sojourner and others.
4. "The Proclamation Day.

### Sojourner's Church Affiliations

1. Correspondence discussing this matter  
(See Section 2, Item 1.)

### Narrative of Sojourner Truth

1. Introduction
2. Gilbert, Olive: Narrative of Sojourner Truth. 1850  
Title page and page 144 (Testimonials)
3. Ibid. 1853. Introduction by H.B. Stowe. 1 page.
4. Ibid. and Titus, Frances: Narrative of Sojourner Truth...  
with..."Book of Life." 1884  
[Book removed and cataloged separately]





SAM TITUS TOLD THE SECRETARY OF THE BATTLE CREEK HISTORICAL SOCIETY THAT SOJOURNER HAD OWNED THREE SCRAPBOOKS WHICH SHE CALLED HER BOOK OF LIFE. THE FIRST, CONTAINING MANY SIGNATURES AND TESTIMONIALS, WAS SENT BACK TO HER HOME COUNTY, ULSTER, NEW YORK. THE SECOND WAS PRESENTED TO THE MICHIGAN MUSEUM IN LANSING. NEITHER HAS BEEN LOCATED. CURATORS AND LIBRARIANS HAVE SEARCHED AND DECIDED THE SECOND VOLUME WAS BURNED IN THE STATE BUILDING FIRE. MRS. TITUS AND HER DESCENDANTS KEPT THIS, THE THIRD VOLUME, WHICH MR. TITUS CALLED "UNIMPORTANT."

MRS. TITUS AND SOJOURNER TOOK A LEISURELY TRIP EAST, STOPPING IN PENNSYLVANIA ON THEIR WAY TO NEW YORK CITY. ON ITS FLY LEAF IS WRITTEN, SOJOURNER TRUTH. DEC. 18, 1878; THEN THE SCRAPBOOK LETS US KNOW THE TWO WOMEN WERE STAYING WITH MR. AND MRS. DANIEL L. UNDERHILL, 232 WEST 37TH STREET BY NOV. 24, 1878. POSTCARDS FROM SAM TITUS TO HIS MOTHER ARE SENT TO THIS ADDRESS AS LATE AS FEBRUARY.

*BB Lowe Box 1 Folder 9 Mementoes*





**MIDLAND**  
★ *notes*



SOJOURNER TRUTH,  
"THE LIBYAN SIBYL."

*number* 27

